

Amendments to the Claims: amendments to the claims are provided as indicated below.

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method of interfacing between a ~~first and a second computer system to process a request by a customer to return a good purchased from a merchant~~ plurality of merchant computer systems and at least one carrier computer system to process customer requests to return goods purchased from said plurality of merchants, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing an interface system that is capable of ~~communicating with said first and second computer systems~~ facilitating communication with said plurality of merchant computer systems and said at least one carrier computer system via a computer network;

receiving at said interface system a customer return request from ~~said first computer system~~ one of said plurality of merchant computer systems, said customer return request including a merchant identifier;

querying a database containing a plurality of returns rules to select one or more returns rules associated with said customer return request from the plurality of returns rules, the selection of said one or more returns rules being dependent on said merchant identifier;

applying said one or more business-selected returns rules to said customer return request to determine whether said request is authorized, the authorization of said request being dependent on which of the plurality of returns rules has been selected;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said ~~second computer system~~ at least one carrier computer system;

receiving at said interface system an image of a shipping label from said ~~second computer system~~ carrier computer system in response to said ~~customer~~ return service request; and

providing said shipping label image to at least one of said first-merchant computer system and said customer.

2 – 4. **(Canceled)**

5. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein said ~~interface system communicates with said first and second computer systems via~~ computer network includes the Internet.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of applying said one or more business-selected returns rules to said customer return request further comprises ~~the step of using said one or more business-selected returns~~ rules to associate a return destination address ~~[[to]]~~ with said customer return request.

7. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 6, wherein the step of using said one or more ~~business-selected returns~~ rules to associate a return destination address ~~[[to]]~~ with said customer return request occurs only if said customer return request is authorized.

8. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of assembling a return service request occurs only if said customer return request is authorized pursuant to said one or more ~~business-selected returns~~ rules.

9. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, further ~~including the step of~~ comprising reformatting said shipping label image as an approximately four inch by six inch shipping label.

10. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein assembling a return service request comprises assembling said return service request as an XML document.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~ transmitting said shipping label image ~~from said first computer system~~ to said customer via electronic mail.

12. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of delivering said shipping label image to said customer~~ updating said database with one or more items of information included in said return service request.

13. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim ~~12~~1, wherein ~~the step of delivering said shipping label image to said customer~~ comprises delivering said shipping label image to said customer via electronic mail said shipping label image includes a package tracking number and said method further comprises storing said package tracking number in said database.

14 – 19. **(Canceled)**

20. **(Currently Amended)** A computer system for interfacing between a plurality of merchant computer systems and at least one carrier computer system to process customer requests to return goods purchased from said plurality of merchants, said computer system comprising:

a database for storing information related to the purchase of said goods by said customers from said merchants, the database containing a plurality of returns rules; and

a processor capable of communicating with said database, said processor configured for:

establishing an interface system capable of facilitating communication with said plurality of merchant computer systems and said at least one carrier computer system[[s]] via a computer network;

receiving at said interface system a customer return request from one of said plurality of merchant computer systems, said customer return request including a merchant identifier;

querying said database to ~~[[obtain]]~~select one or more returns rules associated with said customer return request from the plurality of returns rules, the selection of said one or more returns rules being dependent on said merchant identifier;

applying said one or more selected returns rules to said customer return request to determine whether said customer return request is authorized, the authorization of said request being dependent on which of the plurality of returns rules has been selected;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said at least one carrier computer system;

receiving at said interface system an image of a shipping label from said carrier computer system in response to said return service request; and

providing said shipping label image to at least one of said merchant computer system and said customer.

21. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 20, wherein the step of applying said one or more selected returns rules to said customer return request further comprises the step of using said one or more selected returns rules to associate a return destination address [[to]]with said customer return request.

22. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 21, wherein the step of using said one or more selected returns rules to associate a return destination address [[to]]with said customer return request occurs only if said processor determines that said customer return request is authorized.

23. **(Currently Amended)** The system of Claim 20, wherein the step of assembling a return service request occurs only if said processor determines that said customer return request is authorized pursuant to said one or more selected returns rules.

24. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 20, wherein said processor is further configured for reformatting said shipping label image as an approximately four inch by six inch shipping label.

25. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 20, wherein the step of assembling said return service request comprises assembling said return service request as an XML document.

26. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 20, wherein said processor is further configured for transmitting said shipping label image to said customer via electronic email.

27. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 20, wherein said processor is further configured for updating said database with one or more items of information included in said return service request.

28. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 20, wherein said shipping label image includes a package tracking number and said processor is further configured for storing said package tracking number in said database.

29. **(Previously Presented)** The system of Claim 20, wherein said computer network includes the Internet.

30. **(Currently Amended)** A computer system for interfacing between a plurality of merchant computer systems and at least one carrier computer system to process customer requests to return goods purchased from ~~one of~~ said plurality of merchants, said computer system comprising:

a database for storing information related to the purchase of said goods by said customers from said merchants, the database containing a plurality of returns rules; and

a processor capable of communicating with said database, said processor configured for:

establishing an interface system capable of facilitating communication with said plurality of merchant computer systems and said at least one carrier computer system via a computer network;

receiving, at said interface system, a customer return request sent by one of said plurality of merchant computer systems, said customer return request including a merchant identifier;

querying said database with at least said merchant identifier to ~~[[obtain]]~~select one or more returns rules associated with said customer return request from the plurality of returns rules, the selection being dependent on said merchant identifier;

applying said one or more selected returns rules to said customer return request to determine whether to process said request and to associate a return destination address with said customer return request, the processing of said return request and the return destination being dependent on which of the plurality of returns rules has been selected;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request and the associated return destination;

transmitting said return service request to said at least one carrier computer system;

receiving, at said interface system, an image of a shipping label from said at least one carrier computer system; and

providing said shipping label image to said one of said plurality of merchant computer systems that sent said customer return request.